As the maple season winds down, Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) has written legislation to promote an industry vital to Vermont's economy and brand. On Wednesday, Welch introduced a bill to expand tapping access, promote the industry through marketing and provide funding for maple research.

Welch's Maple Tapping Access Program would authorize \$20 million in U.S. Department of Agriculture grants to states to promote the maple industry. Funds would be available for maple-related research, promoting maple resource sustainability and encouraging marketing for maple syrup and other maple products. Additionally, the grants could be used to open state lands to tapping or provide incentives to private landowners to do so.

"Vermont maple syrup producers help define who we are as a people, a state and an economy," Welch said. "Their trade goes back generations and is an important part of our export and tourism economy, as well as a key defining characteristic of our state brand. Maple syrup and those who produce it are part of the fabric of Vermont. My legislation makes investments in the industry to ensure it remains a strong part of our Vermont's economy and identity for generations to come."

Welch has long been an advocate for maple syrup producers, working to protect the strong brand name they have developed over generations. In September, Log Cabin syrup products \underline{a} greed to remove the ingredient caramel color from its "All Natural Syrup"

brand after Welch called into question whether the company was violating FDA guidelines. Most recently,

Welch wrote to seven national supermarket chains

requesting that the same Log Cabin product be shelved separately from real Vermont maple syrup.

veanesaay, 30 iv	ednesday, 30 March 2011 09:34						
	0 1 (5.11)						
Senator Chuck	Schumer (D-N.Y	.) is introducir	ng Welch's bill	in the Senate.			